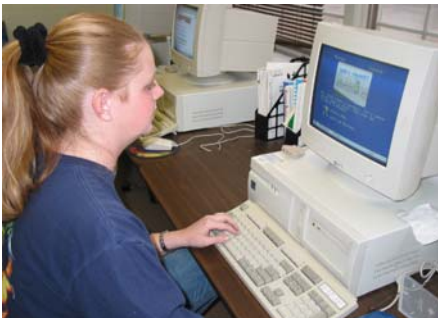




Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Treating Arizona's Social Ills

Arizona, like most of the United States, suffers from social ills such as unemployment, crime and poverty that are intertwined and directly linked to one another. Collectively these factors produce an incalculable human and economic cost. At the core of each of the most pressing issues is the lack of education or English literacy. Many programs deal with the effects of these problems; however, Adult Education and Family Literacy is the solution that gets to the root of the problem, illiteracy.



## The Antidote: Arizona Adult Education

Adult Education attacks the core issue: illiteracy. Treatment options include:

- **Adult Basic Education** - reading, writing and math through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level
- **Adult Secondary Education and GED Test Preparation**
- **English Language Acquisition for Adults** – Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in English
- **Citizenship Test Preparation**
- **Family Literacy** – Helping children reach their potential as learners, providing literacy skills for parents, and assisting parents to become full partners in the education of their children

In Arizona, adult students learn basic literacy skills within specific contexts that directly affect their lives and enable them to become productive citizens in their community:

- **Workforce Literacy** – Knowledge and skills needed to obtain employment, retain employment, or advance in their career track
- **Parenting Education** – Activities to help adult students become more responsible in their role as parents and as their children's first and most important teachers
- **Civics Education** – Lessons that help students become productive and active members of the community
- **Financial Literacy** – Instruction to enable participants to utilize the economic system including savings, checking and the proper use of credit
- **Health Literacy** – Gain knowledge to understand health and safety issues

### Poverty and Welfare

Annually, approximately 38% of people enrolled in Arizona Adult Education programs are unemployed, and a high percentage of those people are receiving public assistance. 90% of the families enrolled in Arizona Family Literacy have annual incomes below \$25,000. Data from the Arizona Department of Economic Security shows that **individuals earn over \$1,000 more the first year after leaving any component of Arizona Adult Education** than they did the previous year.

### Unemployment and an Untrained Workforce

Business leaders bemoan Arizona's lack of a properly trained workforce and the subsequent difficulty attracting new industries. Arizona Adult Education works in partnership with the private sector to provide customized instruction at work sites or with selected employees. The curriculum in traditional Arizona Adult Education settings is regularly presented in the context of the world of work, preparing workers to succeed on the job as well as improving their academic skills.

### Immigration Issues and Language Barriers

Arizona Adult Education is the most effective, cost efficient means of equipping non-English speaking residents to function in Arizona and United States society. Curriculum and instructional materials are in the context of civics and life-management skills. Preparation for the U.S. Citizenship examination is available and used by many adult learners.

### Crime and Recidivism

Among Arizona residents on probation through the court system, GED graduates have a lower new felony arrest record (24%) than other probationers (46% in a state study, 43% nationwide). (*The Effect of Literacy and General Education Development Programs on Adult Probationers, Adult Probation Department of the Superior Court in Pima County, August 1997*)

### Health Issues

The health care industry estimates \$73 billion per year of unnecessary health care expenses attributable to poor literacy. (*ProLiteracy Worldwide*)

**With education, people and society grow stronger, and the standard of living and quality of life for all Arizonans improves.**